studied and passed Class III, IV and V from recognised school/schools in the preceding three continuous academic sessions, spending one full academic session in each class through formal system of education without any repetition of class. No candidate is allowed to appear in the selection test for the second time. At least 75% of the seats in a district are filled by candidates from rural area Reservation of scats in favour of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is provided in proportion to their population in the concerned district, provided that in no District such reservation is less than the national average, efforts are made to ensure that atleast l/3rd of the students selected are Girls.

(c) No, Sir.

National Open Schools in the Country

1169. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of National Open Schools at present in the country;

and whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for opening more such schools;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government propose to bring change with a view to providing an alternative system of education to supplement the formal education system;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Working Group under his Ministry submitted its final report on Open learning system at school stage; and

(d) if so, what are the recommendaitonsmade by the Working Group?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) and (b) There is only one National open School in the country. However, it has its study centres spread throughout the country. At present, there are about 750 study centres.

National Open school was established in 19S9 to provide education to school drop-outs and those who cannot attend regular classes. It is a significant innovation for complementing formal education.

(c) and (d) A working Group on open Learning System at School Stage to suggest proposals for the IX Plan was set up under the Chairmanship of Prof. Uttam Bhoite. The Working Group has submitted its report. The major recommendations of the Working Group include establishment of State Open Schools in various States, establishment of a Centrally Sponsored Scheme to provide financial support to set up State Open Schools, review of reading materials, establishment of National Consortium of Open Schools, to develop vertical and horizontal linkages between open learning System and other sectors of educaiton, establishment of more State Institutes Educaiton Technology (SIETs) and strengthening of media support.

Progress of free compulsory primary education

1170. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of progress, if any, made by the Ministry in executing Government's resolution to provide free compulsory primary education to all as on date; and

(b) if no progress has been made so far, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) and (b) In pursuance of the resolve of the United Front Government to make the right to free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right, the Constitution (Eighty Third Amendment) Bill, 1997 has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 28th July, 1997.